

Commercial and Industrial Buildings,
Illinois Central Railroad Freight Depot
First and Iowa Streets
Dubuque
Dubuque County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-160-G

HABS
IOWA,
31-DUBU,
13-G-

**PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
P.O. Box 25287
Denver Colorado 80225

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Site Location: First and Iowa Streets
Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa
DOT designation: Resource Site No. 7.1
Cadastral grid : SE1/4 NE1/4 S25 T89N R2E
USGS quadrangle: Dubuque South Iowa 7.5'
UTM coordinates: 15.692100.4707060
Lot description: West 100' of Block 2 and
West 100' of Block 3, Dubuque
Harbor Company Addition.

Present Owner: Weber Warehouse Company
Present Usage: retail auto parts salesroom; warehouse
Present Condition : fair

Overall dimensions: 56'x 241'; 1-2 stories
Orientation : north
Architectural Description : Plan type : 1-story rectangular, open-space warehouse,
with 2-story head house on north end.
Foundation: parged stone / concrete perimeter walls.
Structure : wood frame with brick masonry bearing walls.
Ext. walls: common and face brick laid in common bond;
brick pilasters line side walls of both head
house and freight house.
Roofs : asphalt-shingled, moderately pitched gables
with brick parapets on south ends.
Chimneys : brick interior chimney with concrete cap
straddling ridge of head house.
Openings : paired or triple-banked 2/2 of 3/1 wood double-
hung windows with loose lintels and corbeled
brick surrounds in head house; freight house
has no windows. Large loading doors (now in-
filled with concrete block) line west wall of
freight house, each with brick segmental heads
and concrete sills; single leaf entrance door
centered on north wall of head house.
Details : corbeled brick surrounds on windows and doors
of head house.

Construction Date : 1873; c.1915

Architecture Style: Nineteenth Century Functional

Physical History : From as early as 1836, Dubuque citizens were concerned about establishing their city as a railroad connection to augment the growth and prosperity of the town. Galena, Illinois, and Dubuque then competed in pursuing railroad establishment. In 1850-1851 the Chicago and Galena Union

Railway and the Illinois Central Railway [ICRR] were both expanding new routes westward toward the two cities, but it was uncertain whether or not they would eventually reach Dubuque. Despite efforts by Galena to block it, the Illinois Central reached Dunleith (now called East Dubuque) across the Mississippi River from Dubuque in 1855.

Granted a charter on November 24, 1856, the Dubuque and Pacific Railroad extended the 143 miles between Dubuque and Sioux City. The line was later renamed the Dubuque and Sioux City Railroad [D&SCRR] and was leased for several years by the Illinois Central Railroad as an entry into the city before the larger rail line acquired it outright in 1867. At that time the D&SCRR maintained a passenger depot where the present Illinois Central passenger depot [HABS No. IA-160-A] is located, on the corner of Iowa and Jones streets. The Illinois Central also took over its predecessor's repair shops and freight houses on the city's south levee. However, as the ICRR expanded its operations in Dubuque it became apparent that a new freight house was needed.

In 1873 the railroad placed about 18,000 cubic yards of earth fill on this site at the corner of First and Iowa Streets and constructed a brick freight depot alongside its tracks - the first of three such structures built in the rail yards near the Dubuque Ice Harbor. Reportedly costing \$21,000, the building was configured typically for its type, with a long, single-story freight room, eighteen feet in height, which was accessed by loading doors on the side walls and a raised platform on the north end. Its structure was also typical for the period, featuring Howe trusses with timber compression members and iron tension bars that clear-spanned between brick bearing walls. The Illinois Central used the building unaltered as a freight depot for decades before adding a two-story head house, separated from the freight room by a brick fire wall, on its south end. (The construction date for this is unknown, but the architecture suggests c.1915.) Since that last addition, the freight depot has remained essentially unaltered. It has most recently housed an auto parts store in the first floor of the head house (the second floor is vacant), and a tire warehouse in the original rear section. Some of the windows and all of the side doors on the freight house have been infilled and its east wall covered with corrugated steel sheets, but the structure remains otherwise intact.

Significance: As the oldest of three such freight warehouses built in the railyards near Dubuque's ice harbor, the Illinois Central depot is historically significant for its association with early Dubuque rail transportation. It is the earliest structure remaining from the Illinois Central Railroad, which was clearly the most important rail line to serve the city. Though altered by the addition of the head house, the depot is nevertheless an important structure.

References:

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